

Canadian History Plays

LORD SELKIRK

by

IDA M. DAVIDSON, M.A.



with an introduction by

DR. S. P. MATHESON

Archbishop of Rupert's Land and Primate of All Canada;
Patron of the Lord Selkirk Association

With Original Drawing by Evelyn M. Gowanlock

THE MANITOBA TEXT BOOK BUREAU
Winnipeg

CANADIAN HISTORY PLAYS

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with Illustrations

- 1—LORD SELKIRK. This play is based on the founding of the Red River Settlement. It shows the conditions under which the Scottish crofters lived and also the hardships which they had to endure when they came out to the new settlement. It shows the bitter struggle which took place between Lord Selkirk and the North-West Fur Company and the causes for this struggle. Finally it shows the tremendous importance of Selkirk's work in Manitoba. An intensely interesting play of five acts.
- 2—GENTLEMEN ADVENTURERS. The founding of the Hudson's Bay Company. A play in three acts in which is unfolded the story of the two dauntless wood-runners, Radisson and Groseilliers, their ambition to explore the great Northland, the treatment which they received from the leaders in France and in New France; the eagerness with which Englishmen listened to their stories; and finally the help given to them by Englishmen which resulted in the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company.
- 3—ALEXANDER MACKENZIE. A play in three acts which shows the dauntless ambition of Alexander Mackenzie and the seemingly insurmountable difficulties which he had to overcome in his race for the Pacific. A play in which every boy will want to have a part.
- 4—THE ACADIAN TRAGEDY. A dramatized version of the historical incident so beautifully told by Longfellow in his poem, "Evangeline." Time required to produce it about one hour.
- 5—(a) THE CAPTURE OF QUEBEC. A play of three acts in which all of the important details with regard to the capture of Quebec are given in a vivid, dramatic manner.
(b) MADELINE DE VERCHERES. A three-act play based on the well-known incident of Madeline de Vercheres' defence of her father's fort. It is a thrilling story which never fails to hold the interest of the pupils.
- 6—(a) ISAAC BROCK.
(b) LAURA SECORD.
Two plays of three acts each, which show clearly the causes which led to the war of 1812-1814. Each play shows the heroism and invincible courage of our Canadian men and women and their determination to keep this land under the British flag. Time required to act each play about one-half hour.

638 12.80

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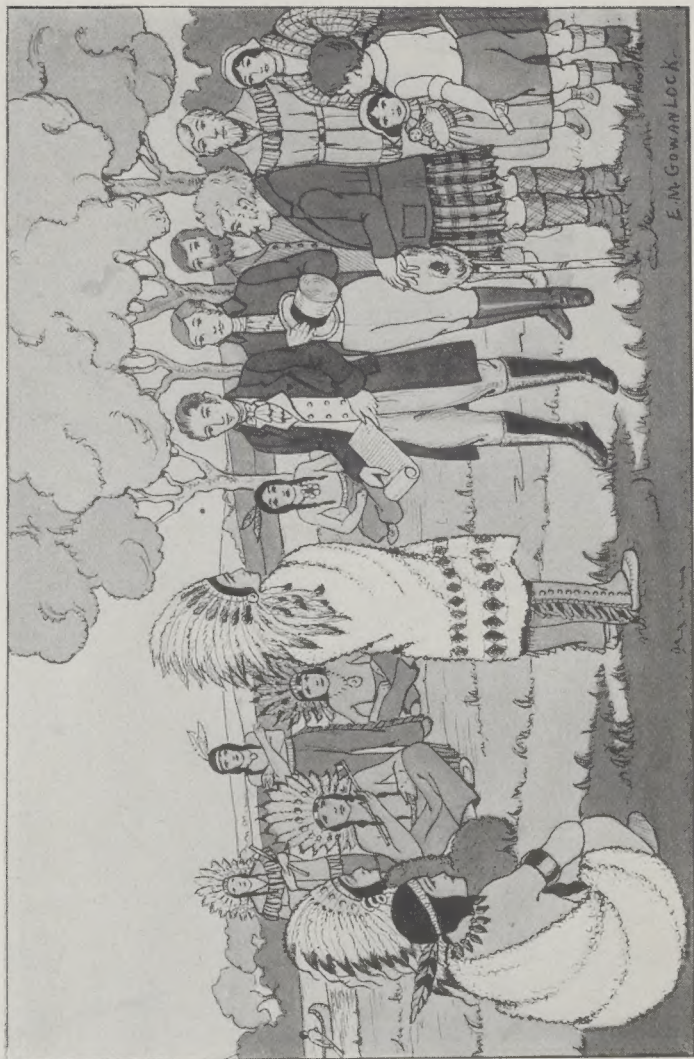
LORD SELKIRK

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made to the author, Ida M. Davidson, M.A.,
371 Kingston Crescent, Winnipeg.*

THE MANITOBA TEXT BOOK BUREAU
WINNIPEG

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E.M. GOWANLOCK.

"Chieftains and warriors of the Chippewa and Cree Nations, I have asked you to meet me here today so that we might conclude a treaty between us." (P. 35.)

INTRODUCTION

Anything that concerns the early history of the Selkirk settlers of this country appeals very warmly to me. It is natural that it should be so, for I am a lineal descendant of some of the original colonists, my father and grandfather having been among the early pioneers who came out from Scotland in 1814. On my mother's side I am a grandson of Mr. John Pritchard, a prominent figure in the events of those early days and one of the few survivors of the tragedy of Seven Oaks in 1816. For these reasons I very heartily commend the play written by Miss Davidson and from my familiarity with the stirring incidents referred to in it, preserved in the traditions of our family, I congratulate her on the general basis and foundation of historical accuracy of her allusions, though they are put forth in dramatic form. The play should be helpful to the children and youth of our day in conserving for them and keeping them in touch with the history of this country in primitive times, which otherwise might be liable to be forgotten and lost.

J. P. Mackenzie, Secy
Patron of the Selkirk
Association

PREFACE

The eight plays in this series do not cover all the important events in Canadian history. They do, however, cover at least one event which is of outstanding importance to each part of the Dominion. They are suitable for production by pupils in Grades VII and VIII and also by students of more mature years. Although each play may be presented without special scenery or special costumes, a little attention to both of these will add a great deal to the interest of the plays. The pupils themselves are usually able to find sufficient material to lend an air of verisimilitude and realism to the setting. A full page illustration showing costumes historically correct and the setting for one scene, carefully prepared by Miss Evelyn Gowanlock, accompanies each play.

I should like to express my sincere appreciation and my indebtedness to those who have assisted me in my work, particularly to the members of the Provincial Library for their courtesy in permitting me the use of many reference books; to Mr. J. S. Little, principal of the Kelvin High School and former principal of the Earl Grey Junior High School, for his many helpful suggestions and also for the opportunity which he afforded me of trying out each of the plays with the junior high school pupils; and to Mr. A. W. Brown, manager of the Manitoba Text Book Bureau, for the invaluable assistance which he has given me in publishing the plays.

I should also like to express my sincere thanks to His Grace, Archbishop Matheson, for his introductory message. This message cannot fail to stimulate an interest in the history of that little band of pioneers who laid so wisely and well the foundations of our own province of Manitoba, and whose determination to remain in the Red River Settlement in spite of the hardships and sufferings which they were forced to undergo undoubtedly did much to save for Canada the whole of the western part of our great dominion.

The material for these plays has been drawn from many sources. I should like, however, to acknowledge my indebtedness to the following: "Lord Selkirk's Work in Canada," Professor Chester Martin; "Life of Lord Selkirk," Dr. George Bryce; "The Romantic Settlement of Lord Selkirk's Colonists," Dr. George Bryce; "The Red River Settlement," Alexander Ross; "Mackenzie and His Voyageurs," Arthur P. Woollacott; "Mackenzie of Canada," M. S. Wade; "British Columbia—The Making of a Province," Judge F. W. Howay; "Pathfinders of the West," Agnes C. Laut; "Vikings of the Pacific," Agnes C. Laut; "Voyages from Montreal Through the Continent of North America and to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans," Alexander Mackenzie; "Evangeline," Longfellow; "Grand Pre," John Frederic Herbin; "The Rise and Fall of New France," Vols. I, II, George M. Wrong; "Acadia," Vols. I, II, Edouard Richard; "History of Acadia," James Hannay; "A Half Century of Conflict," Vols. VI, VII, Francis Parkman; "The Great Company," Beckles Willson; "The Conquest of the Great North West," Agnes C. Laut; "Canada, Empire of the North," Agnes C. Laut; "Dictionary of National Biography"; "The Makers of Canada," Vols. I, II.

I.M.D.

Winnipeg, October, 1932.

CHARACTERS

Lord Selkirk.	Court Crier.
Miles Macdonell.	Henry.
Jock.	Bill.
Tibby.	Pegowis, Indian Chief.
John Morley.	Le Sonnant, Indian Chief.
Mrs. Morley.	La Robe Noire, Indian Chief.
Mr. Morley.	Premier, Indian Chief.
Mr. Pritchard.	L'Homme Noir, Indian Chief.
John McLeod.	Mackenzie.
Angus Matheson.	McGillivray.
Mac MacTavish.	Sellers.
Pat Corcoran.	McLaughlin.
Bridget Corcoran.	Lt. McLeod.
James Sutherland.	McRobb.
Boy.	Cuthbert Grant.
Janet Sutherland.	Nor'West Lawyer.
Mrs. Gunn.	Nor'West Clerk.
Mrs. Matheson.	McKenzie.
Widow Matheson.	Soldiers of Selkirk.
Judge.	Indians.
Selkirk's Lawyer.	Half-breeds.
Clerk of the Court.	Women and Children of Colony.

LORD SELKIRK

ACT I

A room in the Craigenlachie Inn in Old Kildonan, Scotland. The room is large with a low-beamed ceiling. At the back of the room is a large fireplace. To either side of the fireplace are low oaken seats. A door on the left side of the room opens on the courtyard. To the left of the door is a latticed window. A short stairs on the right side of the room leads to another room. There are several tables in the room, one near the right hand side of the fireplace, another near the window. When the curtain goes up, TIBBY is discovered sweeping and dusting. She is singing an old Scottish ballad softly to herself.

JOCK (*appearing in doorway*). I have just been speaking wi' Jamie Sutherland, Tibby. He says the Earl of Selkirk is coming to our village today.

TIBBY. What's bringing his lordship here now. It's over early for the hunting season, Jock.

JOCK. Aye, Tibby, 'tis that, but I expect he has another kind of game afoot.

TIBBY. What do you mean, Jock?

JOCK. Well, Tibby, what would he be coming here for now but to get more settlers for his new colony in America?

TIBBY. Do you think he wants to get more settlers for his new colony in Eastern Canada?

JOCK. No, no, Tibby. He was terribly interested in his colony in Prince Edward Island a while back, but now they say he doesn't speak of a thing but his new colony in Assiniboia.

TIBBY (*straightening up from dusting*). It's fair daft he is to even think of it. But I don't expect he'll get many to go.

JOCK. He'll not get as many as he wants, but he will get a goodly number, I expect.

TIBBY. And why would any one go to such a country? The Highland paper says to go to that country means certain death.

JOCK. I don't believe it's quite as bad as that. It's just a bit of a gamble. But then, Tibby, you never know what your end is to be anyhow. You're here the day and gone the morrow. And to slip off sudden like is not so bad after all.

TIBBY. A pretty gamble, indeed. Yon paper says the Canadian blizzards are fearsome and awfu' like.

JOCK. I don't doubt but that they're terrible. But then you'll have to admit, Tibby, that our own air has a bit of a nip in it at times. I've had to sleep out in the Highlands many a night and I've never been a hair the worse for it.

TIBBY. And the Indians. Yon paper says they're terribly ferocious and wicked.

JOCK. Mind you, I'm not saying that there's no risk in it. But there's a big chance for a body to make a living over there in Canada, and that is something that a poor person can't do in Scotland today.

TIBBY. Well, I must say that I would rather die in my bed than go out to that wild country to be killed.

JOCK. Aye, Tibby, but you mustn't forget that many of these poor crofters have no longer a bed to lie on. They have been driven from their homes like the dumb beasties and then have had to look on while their homes were burned before their eyes.

TIBBY. I know it, Jock. It's a shame. But surely there is some place in Scotland where these poor crofters could find work and where they could build new homes for themselves.

JOCK. No, Tibby, there is no place in Scotland, nor even in the British Isles. And the only person of influence who has given any thought to the condition of these poor people is the Earl of Selkirk. It's the great man he is and no mistake.

TIBBY. I expect you're right, Jock. But it's a sad thing to have to leave the Old Land. (TIBBY goes to door and looks out—her voice changes as she says)—But look, Jock, here comes John Morley with his father and mother. What do you suppose has happened?

JOCK. It looks as if Sellers might have been at his work again.

JOHN MORLEY, *a young man of twenty or so, enters the room from the courtyard. He is accompanied by his aged father and mother, both of whom are frail-looking and silver-haired.*

TIBBY (*hurrying forward and putting her arms about* MRS. MORLEY). Why, Mistress Morley, whatever has happened? You are trembling like a leaf.

JOHN MORLEY (*angrily*). It's that scoundrel, Sellers. The lease on our farm expired today. Sellers says that the Duchess of Sutherland refuses to renew it. And to make sure we wouldn't stay on our little sheiling, he burned it before our eyes.

MRS. MORLEY (*brokenly*). Tibby, yon sheiling has been our home ever since we were married—fifty years next Martinmas, 'twould be. Now, Tibby, we have no home, and what is even worse, we don't know where we can get another.

MR. MORLEY. Dinna bother your head about it, Martha. Something will turn up.

JOHN MORLEY. It's a hard business, but we must do our best.

JOCK. It passes me how a body with so little in her head as the Duchess of Sutherland should have so much power.

MR. MORLEY. It's a pity the Duchess didn't have to suffer as she is making her innocent crofters suffer. (*Brokenly*)—Ah, Jock, I wasn't prepared for this. I always thought the farm was mine for as long as I lived. We've been married fifty years next Martinmas, but it's just like a year the day, and now it's to end like this with her who was the neatest, bonniest, kindest lassie in the Glen without a place to lay her head.

TIBBY. Dinna greet about it. You'll both come in and stop with Jock and me. While there's an empty bed in Craigenlachie Inn no Morley of Kildonan shall go homeless. Come awa' upstairs now——.

The five leave the room through the door on the right. MILES MACDONELL and LORD SELKIRK had entered the room just after the MORLEYS. They had witnessed the preceding

scene. The two now move forward and seat themselves by the table near the fireplace.

SELKIRK. Another family turned adrift. Macdonell, something has got to be done and done quickly. The people here in Scotland are being turned out of their homes by the thousands. Here in Sutherlandshire alone more than one hundred families have been driven from their farms in order that the land which they occupied might be turned into deer parks or into sheep runs.

MACDONELL. The poor crofters are in a bad way, sir, and no mistake.

SELKIRK. They are, and in one sense it can't be avoided. The land will not support the number of people who are trying to live off it. More money can be made from sheep-farming than from grain-farming, and not so many men are required to do the work. The result is that the land owners are taking the means by which they can secure the greatest returns from the land.

MACDONELL. Which means that the luckless tenants can shift for themselves.

SELKIRK. That is about what it amounts to. There doesn't seem to be anything left in Scotland for the tenants and crofters who have been driven from their land except beggary or, what is almost worse, drudgery in some ill-ventilated factory.

MACDONELL. One would expect the British Government to make some effort to look after these people.

SELKIRK. It should, but all the best intentions in the world can do nothing when faced by British conservative pig-headedness.

MACDONELL. So you have shouldered a duty which the government refuses to face. It's rather a pity, though, that the people who might benefit so much from this undertaking seem to show so little appreciation.

SELKIRK. The people are not entirely to blame. Everything I do is misrepresented. Everything I say is twisted into something ridiculous and untrue.

MACDONELL. You don't have to look far for the reason. You are bucking up against the biggest thing in the north-west, and, unless I'm much mistaken, in Eastern Canada, too. The North West Fur Company is controlled by the wealthy and influential men of Montreal. They also control the law and justice of the country. They've had a virtual monopoly of the fur-trade in the west and the north-west for years. In fact, they think this scheme of yours is merely a trick on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company to get the control away from them. How, then, are you going to carry on the struggle?

SELKIRK. I think on its merits. There's no other way. Just cold merits.

MACDONELL. One is apt to forget merits when one is hit below the belt.

SELKIRK. You're not afraid to undertake the leadership of the colony, are you? I warn you, though, it's a job that will call for tact, ingenuity and tenacity.

MACDONELL. I may not be very strong on the first two, but I can't be beat on the last. When I tackle a job I want to tackle all of it and see it through. I'm not afraid and I shall be very glad to have the opportunity to take your colonists across to the valley of the Red River.

SELKIRK. Good. Here are your instructions. (SELKIRK opens up a paper. MACDONELL leans over closer to study it. JOHN MORLEY enters the room through the door on the right. He walks over to the table where SELKIRK and MACDONELL sit. At the same time MACKENZIE and MCGILLIVRAY enter from the courtyard through the door on the left. They take a seat at the table near the window.)

MORLEY. You are Lord Selkirk?

SELKIRK (rising). I am. Can I do anything for you?

MORLEY. I have been told that you are looking for men to go to your new colony in Assiniboia.

SELKIRK. Yes. Do you wish to go?

MORLEY. I've no money to offer you, but if you will give me a chance to work in order to earn a home for myself and for my parents, I'll promise to serve you well.

SELKIRK. If you are willing to work and are not afraid to face a few hardships, you'll have every opportunity to earn not only a home for yourself and for your parents but wealth and honor for those you love.

MORLEY. Real dangers are not hard to face. It's the lurking fear of poverty, of not knowing where to turn to make an honest penny that saps one's strength and fills one's soul with dread.

SELKIRK. Very true indeed. Scotland is our homeland, but in Scotland there are few opportunities for a man without money and education. In Canada there is a chance for anyone who is not afraid to work.

MORLEY. When will the ships be sailing, sir?

SELKIRK. They leave Stornoway one week from today. Do you think you will go?

MORLEY. I'll go, sir, if you'll take me.

SELKIRK. Then that's settled. I'll look after your father and mother until you have a home ready for them in the new land, if you wish.

MORLEY. Thank you, sir. That's very kind of you, sir. Shall I tell them?

SELKIRK. Yes. I'll come with you.

SELKIRK, MORLEY and MACDONELL *leave the room through the door on the right.*

MACKENZIE (*who has heard the preceding conversation*). This scheme of Selkirk's is beginning to look serious. If it goes through it will ruin the North West Fur Company.

MCGILLIVRAY. It's about time we put a stop to it.

MACKENZIE. Yes, but how will we do it?

MCGILLIVRAY. Well, to begin with, we'll start some reports going about Selkirk's motives. Next, we'll spread other reports about the dangers that lie in wait for those who are daring enough to go to the west. It's surprising how quickly such reports spread.

MACKENZIE. It will take more than that to frighten some of our Scottish crofters. (*Angrily*)—If the North West Fur

Company had listened to me earlier, Selkirk would never have got his scheme started.

MCGILLIVRAY. What was your suggestion?

MACKENZIE. I wanted the North West Fur Company to purchase all available shares of the Hudson's Bay Company. They were selling for a mere song. But no. The North Westers thought they could drive the Hudson's Bay Company out of the country by force and by the sheer weight of their superior organization. While they were trying that policy, Selkirk was quietly buying up all the available shares of the Hudson's Bay Company. Now he has the majority of shares and he can do as he wants.

MCGILLIVRAY. Well, since that avenue is closed, we'll fight him in another way. Wherever Selkirk has agents working we'll send our agents to work against him.

MACKENZIE. And mighty little good it will do. We've got agents now in every one of his recruiting grounds, but in spite of it he has almost as many colonists as he can take out.

MCGILLIVRAY. We'll use fair means and foul, but we'll smash his scheme no matter what it costs. Here comes his latest recruit. We'll try to turn him aside.

They get up from the table and move forward to speak to MORLEY who has just entered the room.

MCGILLIVRAY. Fellow!

MORLEY (*haughtily*). Sir, did you speak to me?

MCGILLIVRAY. I did. You were talking with the Earl of Selkirk a few minutes ago. I suppose he told you that you could make a huge fortune away out in the wilds of Canada.

MORLEY. Lord Selkirk gave me the chance to do what every man that is worth his salt wants to do—a chance to work so that he can make a decent living.

MACKENZIE. Do you think it would be possible to make a living on those bleak prairies? Why, man, it can't be done. You'd be a fool to tempt such dangers.

MORLEY. What dangers can one have to face in a new country that would be comparable to those which the evicted

tenants and crofters are facing daily. Here in the British Isles, in a land of plenty, men are driven from their homes without food and without shelter. There is no work for them to do—no way in which they can earn a living. If you really have the good of the people at heart, sirs, it would be much nobler for you to lend a helping hand to the Earl instead of criticizing him and pulling his work to pieces.

LORD SELKIRK *had come into the room a few minutes earlier. He had overheard the conversation between MORLEY and MACKENZIE.*

SELKIRK (*advancing*). Well spoken, Morley. (*To MACKENZIE and MCGILLIVRAY*)—And, sirs, if you could realize the cruel injustice under which these poor crofters have been placed you would do something to relieve their sufferings. In this very district Sellers, who, it is true, is only the bailiff in the employ of the Duchess of Sutherland, is evicting tenants by the hundreds and——.

SELLERS *has come into the room just in time to hear the latter part of the conversation. He speaks angrily*—You are going too far, Lord Selkirk, when you say that my measures are unjust or that her ladyship is acting unfairly. Would you have her protect and coddle a pack of lazy, worthless tenants who persistently refuse to pay their rent?

MORLEY. These crofters are not lazy. They have no money with which to pay their rent. Their crops have been ruined by the blight for the past two years. But surely that is no reason why their farms should be taken from them?

SELLERS. Then let them look for land where the blight will not affect their crops. They can look somewhere else for charity.

MORLEY (*proudly*). Your tenants do not ask for charity. They ask only for justice. The lands on which they live their forefathers won and held by the good broadsword many generations ago. According to the ancient laws of Scotland this land belongs to them.

SELLERS. A pretty tale. Let them take this fiction to the law courts, if they have a mind.

MORLEY. You know only too well that the law courts have wiped out their claims. But what's the use of arguing? These crofters have one friend at least in the noble Earl of Selkirk.

MCGILLIVRAY (*with a sneer*). You mean they can make it easier for the Earl to found a prosperous colony for himself.

SELKIRK. That statement, you know, sir, is a lie. In Canada there are millions of acres of land which these people may cultivate and where they can make homes for themselves.

MACKENZIE. But why not take them to Eastern Canada. There is still plenty of land east of the Great Lakes. Why should you choose to place your settlement right in the heart of the North West Fur Company's activities?

SELKIRK. Because in the centre of Canada where this settlement is going to be placed there is room for thirty million people. And it is there that this settlement is going to be placed whether the North West Fur Company like it or not.

MCGILLIVRAY. I warn you, Selkirk, that if you go on with this scheme of yours you'll regret it. We'll place every obstacle that we can in your way. We'll smash your scheme in spite of all that you can do.

SELKIRK. Indeed! You seem to be rather sure of yourself.

MCGILLIVRAY. It means, Selkirk, either that your scheme fails or that the North West Fur Company will see their profits dwindle. And, by the powers, the latter is not going to happen.

SELKIRK. I defy the North West Fur Company to do its worst. The colonists will be sent out to the Red River Settlement just as quickly as I can make the necessary provisions. And you can take it from me that I'm going through with my plans in spite of all your threats. Good-day, sirs.

MORLEY and SELKIRK *leave the stage by the left door.*

MACKENZIE. It doesn't look as if Selkirk could be so very easily turned from his purpose. But whether he likes it or not this scheme of his has to be crushed.

M^CGILLIVRAY. We'll send notice to the leaders at Montreal to tell the factors in the west that the enterprise must be killed no matter what the cost.

MACKENZIE. It will be mighty hard on the colonists who go out, but when the North West Fur Company has so much at stake there is no room for sentiment. Might is right.

Curtain.

ACT II

Time, June 19th, 1816, about 6 p.m. Interior of Ft. Douglas—The walls of the room are of unpeeled logs, the chinks stuffed with clay and moss. On the walls are the skins of animals. In the back wall is a fireplace made of stones and clay. To the left of the fireplace is a small window. On the north side of the room high up in the wall is another window—it can be reached by a stair or ladder. Below the window is a door leading to the yard.

On the south side of the room is a rude table and near it two benches made of logs. Near the front of the room on the north side is a chair and beside it a crude desk. When the curtain goes up, GOVERNOR SEMPLE is seated in front of this desk. By the table on the south side of the room are seated MACTAVISH and MCLEOD playing checkers. PRITCHARD is seated farther back, sharpening a hoe; ANGUS MATHESON is fitting a couple of pieces of wood together to make a piece of furniture; PAT CORCORAN is mending a bit of fishing net. Just as the curtain goes up, JOHN MORLEY comes to the door followed by PEGOWIS.

MORLEY. Governor Semple, Pegowis would like to speak with you, sir.

SEMPLÉ (*putting down his pen*). Come right in, Pegowis. What can I do for you?

PEGOWIS (*speaking very slowly and deliberately*). Much trouble coming to white man. Let me bring my warriors.

SEMPLÉ. Nonsense, Pegowis. There isn't the slightest danger.

PEGOWIS. Much danger. Let me bring my warriors.

SEMPLÉ. No, no, that is quite unnecessary.

PEGOWIS. Big Chief Cameron make trouble. Want Pegowis to join him. Pegowis say no.

SEMPLÉ. That's fine, Pegowis. But Cameron can do nothing. We have the law on our side.

PEGOWIS. Don't know what law is. But Cameron make trouble. I bring my warriors.

SEMPLE. No, no, Pegowis. We don't need them. There is no danger.

PEGOWIS. Much danger. Pegowis knows. Let me bring my warriors.

SEMPLE. No, Pegowis. I tell you there is no danger.

PRITCHARD. Sir, would it not be wise to take a little precaution. Why not accept Pegowis' offer? It can do no harm even though it should prove unnecessary.

SEMPLE. Don't be so foolish. The Nor'Westers wouldn't dare to attack us. We are British citizens and protected by British law.

PRITCHARD. We're a long way from Britain and British law wouldn't be of much use to dead men.

SEMPLE. What's the matter with you? You've about as much courage as a rabbit. I tell you the Nor'Westers wouldn't dare to attack us. So go home, Pegowis, and don't worry about us. There's no danger at all.

PEGOWIS. Pegowis knows. Trouble very close. Remember what Pegowis tells you.

SEMPLE. Yes, but I'm not at all afraid, Pegowis. Come down to the store-room, Pegowis, and get some tobacco.

PEGOWIS. Pegowis no want tobacco. Pegowis your friend. He come to tell you of danger.

SEMPLE. Well, good-bye, Pegowis. If there is trouble I'll send for you.

PEGOWIS. Too late then. Trouble come very quick.

PEGOWIS *leaves the room.* SEMPLE *follows immediately afterwards.*

MORLEY (*looking after them*). Pegowis seems very much worried. I wish the Governor had listened to his warning.

MATHESON. If the Governor would listen to reason it would be a good deal better. Talking of British law and justice—a lot of good it will do us away out here in this wilderness. If we were all massacred, England wouldn't hear of it for six months or a year, and who would be likely to say anything about it even then?

MORLEY. The Nor'Westers have been acting rather strange lately. It looks as if they meant some kind of mischief.

PRITCHARD. Things have been looking a good deal worse since Governor Semple had their fort destroyed.

MATHESON. Whatever made him do that, anyhow? To destroy Ft. Gibraltar and then to haul the logs from there up to Ft. Douglas was the greatest insult he could have offered to the Nor'Westers.

PAT. Bejabers, they deserved all they got and a bit more. Didn't the Governor find enough evidence against Cameron and McGillivray and all the rest of the Nor'Westers to put the whole jolly lot of them in prison? Weren't they plotting against us? What would you have him do—sit still and wait for them to pick us off?

MATHESON. This is no time to be running needlessly into danger. We have our women folk and our children to think of. The destruction of Ft. Gibraltar was just about as foolish and short-sighted an act as Miles Macdonell's proclamation two years ago.

MCLEOD. By the powers! Our governors do seem to muddle things badly. If Macdonell had used an ounce of common sense he couldn't help but realize that the Nor'Westers would take his proclamation as a direct insult to themselves.

MATHESON. As it was he wasn't able to carry it out.

MCLEOD. If he had carried out his proclamation the Nor'Westers wouldn't have been able to carry on their fur-trading. The trappers and factors depend on the supply of pemmican taken in this district to furnish them with food for the winter. Without it it would be impossible for them to carry on.

PRITCHARD. That may be true. But Macdonell also had the colonists to consider.

MACTAVISH. The colonists paid a pretty price for his blunder. I can tell you it was a pretty sorry-looking crowd that started back for Jack River that day in June.

PRITCHARD. It was a mighty fine thing for the rest of us that McLeod and his three comrades were able to hold out in their little blacksmith fort until the half-breeds got tired and went off.

MCLEOD. Gad, it was no joke either, I can tell you. We had one small cannon and plenty of powder but no shot or no cannon balls. There was a forge in the room. We melted down an old chain that was in the room, added a few broken bits of iron and when the half-breeds came too close gave them a taste of it. They didn't want more than one taste. We were afraid they would set fire to the shop when it got dark enough for them to creep up unobserved. Fortunately, however, a rainstorm put an end to that danger. They soon got tired of waiting and started off for their hunting grounds in the Qu'Appelle district.

PRITCHARD. It was a lucky thing for the colonists that you were able to hold out. To come back and find that some of the homes that had been burned had been rebuilt and to find the harvest gathered in—well, it did make our return a bit brighter. And that dinner that you had ready for us tasted just about perfect.

MCLEOD (*smiling*). We knew that you'd be back and that there would be more colonists from the old land with you. But I wish we could hear from the Earl of Selkirk. He should be somewhere near the Settlement now. He planned to leave Montreal months ago.

MACTAVISH. He knows well enough what is going on in the Settlement. Lagimoniere left with a message for him months ago.

MORLEY. Lagimoniere hasn't returned. He may have been captured by the Nor'Westers.

PRITCHARD. The wealthy and influential men of Montreal have done everything in their power to prevent Selkirk from coming out to his colony. They are determined to crush it. But Selkirk is now on his way. He is bringing one hundred disbanded soldiers with him.

MORLEY (*grimly*). They may come in very useful. It certainly looks as though the Nor'Westers were only waiting for a favorable opportunity to strike.

MACTAVISH (*moving checkers*). Why look for trouble. You've spoiled a good game.

CORCORAN. What are ye tryin' to make, Matheson? A bird cage?

MATHESON. No. I'm making a chair to rest in during the long winter evenings. A bit of buffalo skin for a seat and another bit for the back and I'll have a chair fit for the king himself to sit in.

CORCORAN. Bejabers, it looks more like a trap for rabbits at the present moment.

MACTAVISH and MCLEOD *are playing checkers. A small bare-foot boy enters the room from out of doors.*

BOY. Jock, give me a lift. My ball is stuck up on the roof.

MORLEY *leaves the room with the boy. A moment later he again enters the room. At the same time PAT's wife enters. When she sees PAT, she places her two hands on her hips and scolds him soundly.*

BRIDGET. Is that what ye're doing, ye lazy spalpeen? It's diggin' the taters ye should be at. If ye don't cut the weeds down soon the taters will be lost entirely. Sure, the grass is now as high as yer head.

PAT. Och, Bridget darlin', it's lost I'll be gettin' if I go out at this hour o' the day. Sure, can't ye see I'm mendin' the net so's I can catch some fish to put by for the winter.

BRIDGET. Get away wid ye, Pat Corcoran. Ye're doin' that 'cause ye're too lazy to hoe the taters. Ye can't fool me.

PAT. Och, mavourneen. Ye're too clever, so ye are. But, darlint, won't ye do a step for us now. Sure me fingers are itchin' to play the fiddle, and ye are the bonny one on yer feet.

BRIDGET. Git away wid yer blarney, Pat Corcoran. How cu'd I dance widout a partner, will ye tell me?

PAT. Sure, Bridget, there are half a dozen here who'd be proud to step out wid ye.

MACTAVISH. Mrs. Corcoran, will you give me that pleasure?

BRIDGET. Sure, but ye'll have to step lively if ye do the Irish Jig wid me.

PAT *plays the violin.* MACTAVISH and BRIDGET *begin the dance.* Several others come in—presently a number of couples are dancing the Irish jig. While this dance is going on ALEXANDER SUTHERLAND, dressed in Highland costume, comes into the room. He carries the bag-pipes. As soon as the music of the violin stops and the dancers have stopped, he begins the music for the Highland Reel or the Highland Fling. Two or more couples begin to dance, the others applaud. The music stops, but before the dancers have time to leave the floor the boy rushes into the room much excited. He calls out in a high, shrill voice.

BOY. The Indians—the Indians are upon us——. *All rise hastily, rush for guns, fasten on belts, etc. The boy continues.*

BOY. The Indians are coming—hundreds and hundreds.

MEN (*together*). Where? Where? How far away?

BOY. To the west—by Cat Fish Creek—the Indians—about two miles—they are circling the Settlement—towards the river——.

MORLEY *pulls the rope—a bell outside rings—a number of men, women and children come in—the men seize the guns. SEMPLE comes in.*

SEMPLE. Don't get excited. Take your guns but don't fire unless I give the order. There's no cause for alarm.

MORLEY. Sir, don't you think we should stay in the fort and get all the settlers within the stockade at once.

SEMPLE. No, that is not necessary. I'll go out and tell these men to get out of the Settlement at once.

PRITCHARD. But you won't go without the cannon, sir.

SEMPLE. We won't need the cannon. Well, perhaps it would be as well to take it. You can bring it, Morley. We'll go on ahead and speak to these men. I'll tell them pretty plainly they're breaking the law. There isn't the slightest need for alarm. The women and children can stay inside the fort. The men can come with me——.

SEMPLÉ *leaves the room. He is followed by a number of the men.*

PRITCHARD. Lock the doors and windows when we leave. Everything will turn out all right. We'll be back soon.

PRITCHARD *leaves—the doors are locked—a heavy bolt is shot across the door. The BOY goes to the upper window. He calls to those below.*

BOY. The Indians are on to the Settlement now. The Governor is close to them. There are about thirty men with him. Morley is taking the field piece——.

BRIDGET. Of all the foolish creatures! Sure, I'd say our Governor is about the worst. Why wouldn't he wait for the field piece. Faith! our men will be shot down before they even have a chance to defend themselves.

A pounding is heard on the door. A woman, JANET SUTHERLAND, looks out through the window.

JANET SUTHERLAND. It's Widow Gunn and Mrs. Matheson and her four bairnies.

JANET SUTHERLAND (*unbolts the door*). Come awa' in. It's terrible things are being done the noo.

WIDOW GUNN (50), MRS. MATHESON (34), HUGH MATHESON (10), ANGUS MATHESON (6), JOHN MATHESON (1) and CATHERINE MATHESON (2) *enter*.

MRS. MATHESON. Oh, my bairnies, my bairnies——.

JANET SUTHERLAND. Come awa' into the other room and put them down. We maun just trust in the Lord to protect us.

They go into room at back.

BOY. Oh, why don't they hurry with that field piece—hurry—hurry—hurry. I don't believe those men on horseback are Indians at all. They're not—they're half-breeds dressed up as Indians. They are right on the Settlement now. One of them is talking to Governor Semplé—he is brandishing his gun. It looks like Boucher—yes, it is Boucher. He has jumped off his horse—he has fired. Oh! The Governor has fallen. Now, one of their men—it is Cuthbert Grant—is trying to keep Boucher back. The Governor is getting up—Boucher hits him.

He doesn't move. The half-breeds are firing at our men. Our men are all down—no, two have got away. They are in the bushes by the river. Another man staggers—it's Pritchard—he's talking to Cuthbert Grant. A half-breed tries to hit him. Grant holds the half-breed off. Pritchard and Grant are coming this way now. Pritchard is ahead. Cuthbert Grant is talking to the half-breeds—the half-breeds seem to be angry—but Grant is still holding them back——.

BRIDGET (*who is sitting on a bench and rocking back and forth*). Och, wirra, wirra, what is going to happen to us. Is it killed they all are? Sure! I'm glad Pat didn't hoe the taters, after all. May be it's never a chance he'll have to eat one o' them. (*Angrily*), The dirty spalpeens, comin' here murderin' innocent people! (*Weeping*), Och, wirra, wirra, whatever will happen to us now?

PRITCHARD and MORLEY *stumble into the room. Both are wounded. Two or three women come forward and help to bind up the wounds. Others in the room crowd close.*

MRS. GUNN. Eh, laddie, whatever has happened? Are you badly hurt?

MORLEY. I'm not so badly hurt—just a scratch or two—but John Pritchard is pretty badly cut up.

PRITCHARD. Nothing serious, but if it hadn't been for Lavigne I'm afraid I wouldn't be here now.

MRS. GUNN (*binding up PRITCHARD'S arm*). Is it one of the half-breeds that you helped last spring you are meaning, John?

PRITCHARD. Yes, and today he repaid me a thousand times over for any little kindness that I was able to show him last spring. He saved my life again and again when his companions were determined to kill me. For a few moments I can tell you I thought my time had come. They struck at me with their guns. Lavigne knocked one down and told the others that they would have to kill me over his dead body. He reminded them again and again of the times when I had helped them.

MRS. GUNN. It was the truth he was telling them. If it hadn't been for the help that you gave to some of those half-breeds last spring most of them would have starved to death.

PRITCHARD. Well, that's once that my past deeds saved my life. When Primeau threatened to shoot me, Lavigne seized his gun and reminded him that he wouldn't be living today if it hadn't been for the help that I had given him last spring. Finally they consented to let me go back to Frog Plains in charge of Boucher. I was again threatened by one of the party and this time it was Boucher who saved my life.

WIDOW MATHESON. Do you know, John, if the Governor is alive?

PRITCHARD. The Governor is dead. He was wounded and Cuthbert Grant ordered him to be taken to the fort, but a moment later one of Grant's own men killed him.

WIDOW MATHESON. Dinna tell us, John, that all the men who went out with the Governor have been killed, too.

PRITCHARD. Twenty or more of the men have been killed.

WIDOW MATHESON. Eh, laddie, what will we do? What-ever will happen to us?

PRITCHARD. There is only one thing to do. We must get out of the colony at once.

WIDOW GUNN. You dinna mean to say that we must leave our homes again?

PRITCHARD. Yes, we must leave at once. And we're lucky to have the chance to leave. It was the intention of the half-breeds to kill every man, woman and child in the fort. When Grant told me this, I pleaded with him to spare the women and children at least. I told him that they could have done no harm to anyone whatever he or his party might think the men had done. I reminded him that they were his father's countrywomen, and, in his dead father's name, I begged him to take pity and compassion on them. Finally he consented to allow us to leave the colony on condition that not one shot was fired.

BRIDGET. Fly is it they'd be askin' of us! I'll not budge one step. I'll help to pay them back for what they've done to us.

PRITCHARD. It's useless, Mrs. Corcoran. If you do one thing to aggravate the half-breeds, Cuthbert Grant won't be

able to hold them back. He's having a pretty hard time right now holding them in check. One false move and you'll bring destruction on all the rest of the colonists.

MORLEY. I'll carry the news to Lord Selkirk. He must be close to Ft. William by this time. The hundred disbanded soldiers that he has with him will come in mighty handy.

PRITCHARD. They certainly will. Until he can send us help we'll have to retire to Jack River. It won't be long, though, before he retakes the Settlement and punishes the Nor'-Westers as they richly deserve. But you had better get away before Grant comes in.

MORLEY *leaves the stage—a moment later GRANT comes on to the stage. The women and children shrink back from him.*

GRANT. Listen to me, you Selkirk settlers. I'm Cuthbert Grant. I expect you all know who I am. I'm telling you that you people are in a pretty tight place right now. And you can blame your governors for it. You've got to get out of here at once. If you don't, you'll be sorry. Your lives wouldn't be worth one brass farthing if I let my half-breeds have their way right now. So take this warning. Get your goods packed and leave this Settlement by sunrise tomorrow. If you're not away by that time I won't answer for the consequences. By the powers! I'm not sure that I can hold my half-breeds back even for that long.

MRS. MATHESON *is standing in doorway of room holding her babe in her arms, the other children are holding to her skirts. She cries out in a broken voice: Oh, my bairnies, my wee bairnies——.*

Curtain.

ACT III

Time, August 13th, 1816. Place, Ft. William—the Nor'West Fur Company's headquarters. A large room is furnished comfortably but plainly. Trophies of the hunt are upon the walls and upon the floor. MCGILLIVRAY, MCLEOD, MCKENZIE, MCLAUGHLIN and two or three others are seated about the table. Two windows at the back look out upon the courtyard. They are open. A door on the right side leads to the courtyard. Another on the left side leads to an inner room.

MCGILLIVRAY (*turning over some papers in front of him*). The dividends of the North West Fur Company are lower than they've been for years. Look at these figures. (*He pushes papers over for others to see.*) It's that Red River Settlement that's the cause of all the trouble. We've got to make an end of it or it's going to ruin us.

LT. MCLEOD. We'll make an end of it and that right soon. Cuthbert Grant has the half-breeds under his control and he'll stand by the Nor'Westers through thick and thin. We'll use force if we have to, but, by the powers! we're going to wipe that Settlement out of existence at once. Perhaps it's done already.

MCKENZIE. We daren't carry on the fight too openly. If lives are lost we'll have the British Government investigating. Their officers will be buzzing around here like a swarm of bees and they might bring some things to light that would be just as well kept in the dark.

LT. MCLEOD. Nonsense. We started the fight as soon as we learned that Selkirk was planning to start this colony and we're not going to withdraw now.

MCGILLIVRAY (*angrily*). If Selkirk persists in trying to balk us, we'll crush him and his Settlement just like that. (*He opens his right hand and clenches it tightly.*)

MCLAUGHLIN. I thought Lord Selkirk was coming out to look over his Settlement. Didn't Lagimoniere say so?

MCGILLIVRAY. Yes, and Lagimoniere is cooling his heels in our dungeons right now. Of all the beastly luck! I don't see

what our men were thinking of to let him get through with that message to Selkirk.

LT. MCLEOD. It didn't do Selkirk much good. He's been trying to get help from the Governor-General and from the Councillors in Lower Canada for months now. Wants to have himself made justice of the peace and to have some soldiers to protect him and his colonists from our fury. He didn't get much help, though.

McKENZIE. We haven't heard anything about him for some time.

McLAUGHLIN. You don't suppose he's on his way west, do you?

LT. MCLEOD. It's not likely. He can do nothing if he does come. The Settlement will be wiped out and nobody will know the cause of it.

McKENZIE. I must say again I think you are making a very big mistake in your methods. But listen! (*A noise is heard without.*) Some of the brigades must be coming in. (*The men rise.*)

The voices of the voyageurs can be heard in the distance singing the words of one of the French-Canadian songs, "A La Claire Fontaine," or "En Roulant Ma Boule, Roulant," etc. Selections will be found in "Canadian Folk Songs," selected and translated by J. Murray Gibbon. The voices grow louder as the voyageurs come closer. CUTHBERT GRANT followed by the half-breeds enters the room. All are dressed in voyageur costume. The men are carrying paddles or guns. They put the guns or paddles on the floor by the wall. They come over to the table where the Nor'Westers stand. The singing stops.

LT. MCLEOD. Well, what is the news from the west?

GRANT (*proudly*). We've carried out your orders. The Settlement has been wiped out.

Some of the Nor'Westers appear satisfied and cheerful; others appear alarmed.

LT. MCLEOD. Good! Upon mine honor, if that is true you'll be handsomely rewarded. But, come, have a drink and then give us the news.

MCLEOD *pours a drink for GRANT; the others help themselves.*

GRANT (*laughing*). Governor Semple was killed, and twenty others along with him. The rest of the settlers were mighty glad to get out of the Settlement. One of our men followed them to Jack River. (*Laughing*), Ha, ha. They won't give us any more trouble.

LT. MCLEOD (*raising his glass*). Drink to the bravery of the New Nation! Here's to the bravery of the Bois Brules, the bravest of the brave. Hip, hip, hurrah!

The cheering dies down. Some of the Nor'Westers still look alarmed and dissatisfied.

McKENZIE. I don't like it. Deliberate murder can't go unpunished. England will interfere.

LT. MCLEOD (*roughly*). Then England will learn that the Nor'Westers aren't going to submit to insult from anyone. (*Turning to half-breeds and unpinning a medal from his own coat.*) But bravery must be rewarded. (*He pins the medal on GRANT, then taking other medals from his pocket he pins them on BOUCHER, DESCHAMPS and others.* And now to every man who helped restore the honor of the North West Fur Company will be given a complete winter outfit. *The half-breeds cheer.*

LT. MCLEOD. Here's to the brave old voyageurs!

The glasses are raised and emptied. The half-breeds again begin to sing one of the old French-Canadian songs—"A La Claire Fontaine" or "En Roulant Ma Boule, Roulant," etc. They keep time to the music with their glasses—some take paddles, or bottles or tongs, get down on the floor as if they were in a canoe and sing lustily the song, keeping time to the stroke of the paddle. (This is one of the incidents in the famous banquet scene that was enacted each year at Ft. William when the business of the year was over. On these occasions it would last for hours.)

When the Nor'Westers are at the height of their hilarity the door opens and LORD SELKIRK, followed by a large number of armed men, enters the room—other armed men stand outside the open windows. The singing suddenly stops, and there is silence in the room until MCGILLIVRAY speaks.

MCGILLIVRAY (*angrily*). What's the meaning of this, Selkirk?

SELKIRK. It means, McGillivray, that your game is up. You and your company are responsible for the murder of Governor Semple and twenty of my colonists. The half-breeds who committed the crime are merely the tools of the North West Fur Company. And the men who are responsible for the crime can answer for it. I arrest you, William McGillivray, and you, Lt. McLeod, for urging these men on to commit this murder. (*Two of SELKIRK's men step forward and handcuff the two men while the rest of the Nor'Westers look helplessly on.*) There may be other arrests later on when I have had an opportunity to find out who else is responsible for the crime. In the meantime the partners and factors may remain in this room. The rest will go into the next room. Leave your guns and weapons on the floor. My soldiers will look after them. If you try any underhand tricks, I warn you, you'll be punished instantly.

The Nor'Westers and half-breeds leave through the door on the left. They are followed by the soldiers of SELKIRK. SELKIRK goes out to see that all the men are properly secured. MCLEOD, MCKENZIE, MCLAUGHLIN and MCGILLIVRAY are in the room. A clerk of the Nor'West Company comes in from outside. He looks surprised when he sees MCLEOD and MCGILLIVRAY handcuffed.

CLERK. What's the matter?

MCGILLIVRAY. Sh! (*speaking hurriedly and in loud whisper*)—Bring in that bag. Place these letters and papers in it. They would ruin us if they ever got into court. Drop them out of the window now, and the first chance you get, burn them.

The papers are gathered together, placed in a bag and dropped out of window.

MCGILLIVRAY. Get Mitchell to write out a warrant for the arrest of Selkirk and have him serve it on Selkirk at once. Mitchell has the power. Selkirk has no legal right to hold the goods of the North West Fur Company. If he is permitted to hold the furs which are here at Ft. William he can prevent all

dividends from being paid to the shareholders. Such an act will not be tolerated. We'll teach Selkirk where his place is before this struggle is over.

The CLERK leaves the room. SELKIRK enters. He looks about sharply.

SELKIRK. I am going to send you down to Montreal for trial. If you will give me your word of honor that you won't try to escape, I will have the handcuffs removed and you will be treated like gentlemen.

MCGILLIVRAY. Selkirk, you're going a bit too far. You'll find it out, too, before long.

SELKIRK. I'm willing to take the risk. Have I your word of honor?

MCGILLIVRAY. Yes. We are quite willing to leave our case to the courts of Lower Canada.

SELKIRK. Good. Roberts, remove the handcuffs. Take these two men to Montreal at once. Give this paper to the Judge of the Court at Montreal. Show every consideration to your prisoners but see to it that they do not escape.

ROBERTS leaves the room with MCGILLIVRAY and MCLEOD.

SELKIRK. Mr. McKenzie and Mr. McLaughlin, you will be kept in your rooms in honorable confinement for the present.

McKENZIE. Lord Selkirk, I regret very much some of the incidents which have happened recently. I regret particularly the murder of Governor Semple and twenty of your colonists.

SELKIRK. It is your company that is responsible for the death of these men.

McKENZIE. They were killed by the half-breeds, and I think you'll have some difficulty proving that the half-breeds were not responsible for the crime. On the other hand, you'll have still greater difficulty in bringing them to justice.

SELKIRK. The half-breeds were merely the tools of the North West Fur Company.

McKENZIE. Perhaps, but you'll have some difficulty in proving that. You've taken the law into your own hands here and have put yourself into a very unfortunate position. Why

not listen to reason? Break up your colony. The North West Fur Company will transport the settlers free of charge to Eastern Canada. A piece of land will be given to each settler. Then let the two companies unite. By such a union both the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Fur Company would be able to increase their dividends many times over. It's either a union or a fight to the finish.

SELKIRK. Then let it be a fight to the finish. I certainly shall not desert my colonists after the hardships which they have endured. Nor will I consent to a union between the Hudson's Bay Company and the company that is responsible for the death of Governor Semple and twenty of my colonists. Every cent of my fortune and every ounce of my energy will be spent to keep the Settlement where it is.

MCKENZIE. Then be prepared to accept the consequences.

SELKIRK *rings bell. A soldier opens the door. He salutes.*

SELKIRK. Campbell, show these two gentlemen to their rooms and keep a strict watch upon all their movements.

MCKENZIE and MCLAUGHLIN *leave room followed by soldier. SELKIRK begins to examine papers. MORLEY enters.*

MORLEY. Lord Selkirk, there is a man outside who wishes to speak with you.

SELKIRK. Who is it? What does he want?

MORLEY. I can't say, sir. He refuses to speak to anyone but you. He says he brings a message to you from Mitchell.

SELKIRK. Show him in. I'll speak to him.

MORLEY *leaves. He returns a moment later followed by MITCHELL's messenger, MCROBB.*

MORLEY. Here he is, sir.

SELKIRK *(turning to face MCROBB)*. Well, what do you want with me?

MCROBB. I only want to give into your own hands, sir, this warrant for your arrest. Lord Selkirk, in the King's name, I arrest you for unlawfully seizing the property of the North West Fur Company.

SELKIRK. What do you mean? What authority have you to serve a summons upon me? Show me your authority.

MCRABB *shows his badge and gives SELKIRK a paper. SELKIRK examines the paper.*

SELKIRK (*slowly*). Your authority seems to be perfectly in order. (*Angrily*)—Another trick of the Nor'Westers. They would like to get me out of the way so that they could keep my colonists out of the Red River district. Well, I'm not going with you. I suppose I'll be made to pay for defying the King's warrant, but I'll pay for it if I have to. You can tell your masters that I'll meet them later at Montreal and fight them at their own game, but that in the meantime I shall go to the assistance of my colonists.

MCRABB *leaves the room.*

SELKIRK. Morley, it looks as if there was a stiff fight ahead of me, but I certainly have no intention of turning back now. Miles Macdonell will take a party of soldiers with him and recapture Ft. Douglas. Do you think that you could carry the news to the settlers that it will be safe for them to return to their homes? I will meet you later at Ft. Douglas.

MORLEY. Nothing could give me greater happiness, sir.

SELKIRK. You had better leave as soon as possible. I'll follow later.

MORLEY *leaves the room. SELKIRK continues examining the papers.*

Curtain.

ACT IV

Time, July, 1817. An open space on the left bank of the Red River, near the present site of St. John's Cathedral. In the background the river may be seen meandering along. To the left of the stage a number of Indian chiefs are seated; Indian warriors stand behind them. To the right of the stage a number of the settlers, men, women and children, stand, SELKIRK enters from the left. A Highlander plays a rousing song of welcome on the bag-pipes. (If there is no piper present the people will sing a hymn of praise.)

SELKIRK. Friends, I am glad to be with you again. It is now almost five years since the first group of settlers landed upon these banks. For you those years have been filled with hardship and toil and danger and sorrow, much of it needlessly caused by the selfish greed of a few men.

You have lived through these first hard years. You have planted here homes for yourselves, for your children and for your children's children. Here on the banks of the Red River you have laid the foundations of a British settlement. This settlement will one day form the connecting link between the British settlements on the Atlantic and on the Pacific Oceans.

What you are doing today may not seem very wonderful to you. But in the onward march of history this work of yours, this settlement started by you may prove of tremendous importance.

JAMES SUTHERLAND. Without your help, sir, we could not have done it. And we're mighty glad to have you with us at last, I can tell you.

SELKIRK. I would have been with you long before this if it had not been for the obstacles which were placed in my way. But now that I am here I would like to make a treaty with our Indian brethren. I would like to pay them for their rights in these lands which we occupy.

SUTHERLAND. That is a very wise act, your lordship.

SELKIRK (*turning to chieftains*). Brethren—Le Sonnant, La Robe Noire, L'Homme Noir, Premier, Pegowis—chieftains and warriors of the Chippewa and Cree nations, today I have asked you to meet me here so that we might conclude a treaty between us. May I now read to you this treaty?

The Indians nod assent. PEGOWIS *speaks*: We will listen to the words of the Silver Chief.

SELKIRK *reads the treaty*. This indenture made on the 18th day of July in the 57th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord, King George the Third, and in the reign of our Lord 1817, between the undersigned chieftains and warriors of the Chippewa or Salteaux nations and of the Killistine or Cree nations on the one part and the Right Honorable Thomas, Earl of Selkirk, on the other part. Witnesseth that for and in consideration of the annual present, or quit-rent hereinafter mentioned, the said chiefs have given, granted and confirmed and do by these presents give, grant and confirm unto our Sovereign Lord the King, all that tract of land adjacent to the Red River and the Assiniboine River, beginning at the mouth of the Red River and extending along the same as far as the Grand Forks at the mouth of the Red Lake River and along the Assiniboine River as far as the Muskrat River, otherwise called Riviere des Champignons, and extending to the distance of six miles from Ft. Douglas on every side and likewise from Ft. Daer and also from the Great Forks and in other parts extending in breadth to the distance of two English statute miles back from the banks of the said rivers on each side, together with all the appurtenances whatsoever of the said tract of land, to have and to hold forever the said tract of land and appurtenances to the use of the said Earl of Selkirk and of the settlers long established thereon with the consent of our Sovereign Lord the King or of the said Earl of Selkirk.

Provided always, and these presents are under the express condition that the said Earl, his heirs and successors or their agents shall annually pay to the chiefs and warriors of the Chippewa or Salteaux Nation the present or quit-rent of one hundred pounds weight of good merchantable tobacco to be delivered on or before the 10th day of October at the forks of

the Assiniboine River and to the chiefs and warriors of the Killistino or Cree Nation a like present or quit-rent of one hundred pounds of tobacco to be delivered on or before the 10th day of October at Portage la Prairie on the banks of the Assiniboine River.

Provided always that the traders hitherto established upon any part of the above mentioned tract of land shall not be molested in the possession of the lands which they have cultivated until His Majesty's pleasure shall be known.

In witness whereof the chiefs aforesaid have set their marks at the forks of the Red River on the day aforesaid.

Signed—(SELKIRK).

PEGOWIS. The words of the Silver Chief are as the rays of sunshine, fair and pure. Pegowis will always be the true friend of the white man. *He puts his mark upon the treaty paper.*

CHIEF LE SONNANT. King George's man is like the gentle rain. He brings to his Indian brothers peace and plenty. We have often been told that you were our enemy, but we hear from your own mouth the words of a true friend. *He places his mark on the treaty.*

CHIEF LA ROBE NOIRE. La Robe Noire would be false to his people if he refused to accept this noble offer of the Silver Chief. *He places his mark on the treaty.*

CHIEF L'HOMME NOIR. Clouds have overwhelmed me and I was a long time in doubt, but now I see clearly. The Silver Chief is a true friend to his Indian brethren. *He places his mark on the treaty.*

CHIEF PREMIER. It must not be said that Premier was unfriendly to his white brethren. He loves them dearly. Let me place my mark upon the treaty paper. *He places his mark.*

SELKIRK. I am glad that my people will now be able to live in peace with their Indian brethren. *(Turning to settlers.)* Our brethren of the Cree and Chippewa nations have been generous. An Earl of Scotland may not be less generous. To each of my people who suffered in the pemmican war I now grant a piece of land comprising ninety English statute acres.

SUTHERLAND. You have been very kind to your people, Lord Selkirk. We will not forget your kindness.

SELKIRK. No kinder than you deserve. You have laid the foundations here for a British Settlement. But no nation can become strong without education and without religious instruction. In order that you may have both education and religious instruction I now grant you two additional lots. On this one you shall build your church; across the creek you shall build your school. A minister of the gospel will be sent to you as soon as I can arrange for one to come out.

SUTHERLAND. Three cheers for the Earl of Selkirk, the truest friend the Scottish people ever had.

Cheers.

SUTHERLAND. You'll bide with us a bit longer, your lordship? It is a grand country we have here and no mistake.

SELKIRK. I would stay longer with you if it were possible. There is so much here that I would like to do. But I cannot. I must leave at once for Montreal. I have been accused of breaking the laws of this country and I have to leave at once to face a trial in Montreal. However, as soon as I am free to come, I will come out to see you again. In the meantime, I will leave everything in the hands of those who will look after your interests.

SUTHERLAND. We hope that you will be able to come back to see us very soon, sir.

Curtain.

ACT V

Time, 1818. Place—A Court of Justice in Montreal. At the back of the stage is the Judge's stand raised above the general level. In front of the Judge's stand is a long table, with a chair at either side for the two lawyers—a chair at the right side of this table is for the defendant, LORD SELKIRK. To the left side of the stage are seats for the spectators. A door at the right side leads to an outer room. When the curtain goes up two caretakers, BILL and HENRY, are busy dusting the room.

HENRY. I s'y, Bill, ain't yer got thet jedge's seat a-polished off yet? 'E'll be doin' it 'isself afore long.

BILL. That won't hurt my feelin's none. Blimme, 'Enery, if this ain't the rummiest bizness. 'Ere's 'is lordship who's a-tryin' to 'elp some poor coves ter get a start in life. And wot 'appens? These other gents say as 'ow 'e is a-poachin' on their preserves. They drive 'is settlers out. 'E brings 'em back, and then they fetch 'is lordship down 'ere ter Montreal fer trial.

HENRY. And wot a trial! It's been a-goin' on fer nigh on to two years and it looks as if it might go on fer another two.

BILL. Wot else could yer expect? Blimme, 'Enery, ain't one o' those Nor'Wester gents a member o' the Legislative Council of Lower Canada? 'Asn't 'e a 'and in makin' the jedges and seein' that the law suits 'is company? Now, if this was in England——.

HENRY. Well, if yer ain't gettin' sentimental, Bill. But 'ere comes 'is Nibs.

BILL. Who's 'is Nibs?

HENRY. The jedge, of course. (*Looking out of window.*) And the spectators are comin' a-flockin' ahead o' 'im. Stow yerself away in a corner, Bill, and listen to wot's a goin' on. Ye've chased enough o' those microbes fer one day.

BILL. Git yer lid there, 'Enery, or the jedge'll be usin' it fer a cushion. And don't yer stand on me neckerchief, neither. That's me Sunday wipe, I'd hev yer know.

HENRY takes his hat off the judge's stand. He and BILL go to the back of the room. A number of spectators come in and take their seats. The two lawyers come in and take their places. LORD SELKIRK's lawyer is at the right hand side of the table, the lawyer for the North West Fur Company at the other end. LORD SELKIRK takes the chair for the defendant at the right of the judge's stand. The judge takes his place. The court-crier stands to the right and front of the judge's stand and calls out in a loud voice.

COURT-CRIER. O yea, O yea, O yea! All manner of persons having anything to do with His Majesty's Court of King's Bench for the Judicial District of Montreal may now draw nigh, give their attendance and they shall be heard. God save the King.

JUDGE. Lord Selkirk, you stand accused, first of unlawfully seizing and wrongfully holding the property which belonged to your rivals, the North West Fur Company; secondly, of contempt of the laws of England when you refused to obey the summons served upon you by Mitchell, a justice-of-the-peace for Canada. What have you to say?

SELKIRK. Your worship, I consider the circumstances justified my actions. I arrested the men who were responsible for the massacre of twenty-one of my settlers at the Red River Settlement, and I held the property of the company of which they were the leaders until the courts of this country would have time to decide what should be done with it. The summons served upon me by Mitchell was undoubtedly also the work of these same men. I refused to obey it. If I had acted otherwise my colonists would most certainly have had additional hardships and suffering to endure. My own life would also undoubtedly have been endangered. Under the circumstances, I consider there was no other course that I could follow.

SELKIRK'S LAWYER. Your worship, I protest there is something very wrong here. The arrest of Lord Selkirk and this trial is the work of malice and the deliberate attempt on the part of the Nor'Westers to break up the colony at Red River. For the slight offence—if indeed it is an offence—of his lordship holding the goods of the company until such time as the

courts had time to decide on the merits of the case—and remember his lordship voluntarily deposited an amount of money equal to the value of the furs—for such a small offence, I say, this trial has been prolonged two years and every difficulty has been placed in the way of his lordship securing justice. The expense that he has had to bear is beyond all reason. His health is broken down. In spite of it all, however, he still firmly believes in the justice of his cause.

JUDGE. Do not blame the courts. His lordship shall have full justice.

SELKIRK'S LAWYER. He asks no more. Your worship, I have here a letter from Lord Bathurst. Do you know what is in it?

LAWYER FOR THE NOR'WESTERS (*looking startled and glancing hurriedly through his papers*). One moment. There's been a mistake. That letter is private and is not meant for the general ear.

SELKIRK'S LAWYER. It will ring so loudly down the ages that every ear shall hear it. Your worship, by this letter it appears that the Nor'Westers have used bribery. This is treason against the State.

LAWYER FOR THE NOR'WESTERS. I demand that letter back.

SELKIRK'S LAWYER. And I say that you shall not have it. A copy has already been sent to England. Should a Colonial Secretary accept bribery? The English people will decide.

LAWYER FOR THE NOR'WESTERS. Your worship, I demand that this letter be returned to me.

JUDGE. The letter must be produced in court. Give it to me.

The JUDGE takes the letter, put his glasses on and reads it.

JUDGE. Lord Selkirk, this letter proves beyond a doubt that you have been the unfortunate victim of a conspiracy. I can do nothing more than to acquit you of the charges brought against you. If you wish to bring to justice the men who have caused you so much trouble, you must lay your charges against them.

SELKIRK. Bring them to justice! Your worship, how can it be done? Haven't I tried every means in my power to do it? You know the result. I sent to Montreal the men who were responsible for the murder of twenty-one of my colonists and for the suffering of all the rest. What happened to them? They were freed, every one of them. Then I was attacked. My trial from first to last has been a farce. The scene has shifted from place to place—from Lower Canada to Upper Canada and back again. For what purpose? Merely to pile additional expense upon me. Now I am acquitted because a letter has come to light showing that the Colonial Secretary is entangled in the conspiracy. That means that England will begin to investigate the matter.

Well, the Nor'Westers have made me suffer; they've made my colonists suffer; they've made me pay to the last dollar, but they haven't made me give up my colony, nor will they. My colony still stands intact. My colonists are prospering, as they would have prospered years ago if they had been given the chance. The day is not far distant, your worship, when that colony will be the connecting link between the British colonies on the Atlantic and on the Pacific Oceans. From this union, sir, will spring a nation strong and noble, loyal to England, yet in its own strength bearing aloft the torch of freedom. And it will be to my colonists who have been forced to endure such hardships that much of the honor will be due.

JUDGE. And to you, too, Lord Selkirk. One day you will be acclaimed as one of Canada's greatest builders.

Curtain.

NOTES

1—In 1803 the Earl of Selkirk founded his first colony. Eight hundred settlers from Argyle, Ross-shire, Inverness and the Isle of Skye were taken to Prince Edward Island. Much of the land taken up by these colonists had formerly been occupied by the French settlements in the old Ile St. Jean.

2—Simon McGillivray, one of the Nor'West partners in London, under the pseudonymn of "Highlander," had written a number of articles in the Inverness Journal warning the Scottish people against the dangers and difficulties which they would have to face if they went to the Assiniboine district as colonists.

3—In Scotland a change in the system of farming was causing terrible suffering. Thousands of the people were leaving the country and going to the United States. Selkirk realized that emigration was the only cure for the poverty and suffering of the people, but he wished to keep the British people under the British flag. In 1802 he proposed to the British government that a system of emigration to the British colonies in America was the only cure for the over-population in the British Isles. In the British Isles people were starving for lack of land. In British America lands lay idle for lack of people. He offered to devote his full time and energy to carrying out the proposal. The British government was too busy at that time with the Napoleonic wars, however, to give time or thought to the proposal. He next tried to interest the Hudson's Bay Company in a plan of emigration, but again he was doomed to failure. They were more interested in making a profit from the fur-trading than they were in any visionary scheme of colonization. Selkirk had in the meantime bought a controlling interest in the Hudson's Bay Company, and in May, 1811, the Hudson's Bay Company granted to him a tract of land comprising 116,000 square miles for the purposes of colonization.

4—In 1811, Sir Alexander Mackenzie urged the North West Fur Company to buy a controlling interest in the Hudson's Bay Company. His advice, however, was not taken.

5—In spite of every inducement offered by the Nor'Westers to the Indians, they remained friendly to the settlers and to the Hudson's Bay Company.

6—On January 8th, 1814, Miles Macdonell issued a proclamation in which he forbade anyone to take from the territory granted to the Earl of Selkirk any food procured or raised within the territory. This proclamation was very unwise; first, because it further antagonized the North West Fur Company, the most powerful commercial organization in the whole of British North America, and, secondly, because it definitely turned the half-breeds against the settlers.

The North West Fur Company believed that the proclamation was deliberately planned to cripple and to ultimately break their company. Without the pemmican procured in the Red River district the trappers and factors in the far north could not have carried on their work. The American victory on Lake Erie in the spring of 1813, which threatened to cut off the Athabasca canoes from all other sources of supplies made this motive seem even more apparent. The Earl of Selkirk, who was in no way responsible for this act of Macdonell's, deeply regretted it.

Macdonell soon realized that if he wanted the pemmican he would have to take it. Early in June he seized four hundred bags of pemmican from the Nor'Westers. Duncan Cameron, the Nor'West factor at Ft. Gibraltar, immediately retaliated by arresting Howse, Macdonell's agent, on a charge of burglary. Later, Macdonell stopped two Nor'West canoes coming up from the lake. He liberated the men in the canoes on parole but stored the guns and ammunition found in the canoes in Ft. Douglas. Thrust and counter-thrust followed each other in rapid succession.

When the news was carried to Ft. William of Macdonell's proclamation and of his subsequent acts the Nor'Westers were furious. The situation was discussed behind closed doors. William McGillivray, of Montreal, Justice of the Peace, Lieutenant-Governor, and Legislative Councillor of Lower Canada, had been intimately connected with the fur trade for thirty years and it was the first time, he declared, that the Nor'West

Company had ever been insulted. It was then and there decided that the only way in which they could retrieve their honor was to wipe out the settlement.

The first blow was struck on September 5th, when Duncan Cameron arrested Sheriff Spencer on a warrant issued by Lt. A. N. McLeod. Next, the half-breeds, urged on by the Nor'Westers, defied Macdonell and ran the buffalo on horseback. When the settlers approached the buffalo on foot, the half-breeds stampeded the whole herd.

Force was not the only weapon which the Nor'Westers knew how to use. The settlement had progressed smoothly and rapidly during the summer. The settlers had never been happier nor more contented. The actions of the Nor'Westers, however, made them afraid they would lose their homes. Did Selkirk have the law on his side after all? Cameron worked upon this fear and at the same time pretended to be deeply concerned for their welfare. He entertained them lavishly and during the long winter nights the walls of Ft. Gibraltar resounded to the skirl of the bagpipe as the highlanders danced and sang. Finally Cameron persuaded a number of the settlers to consent to go to Upper Canada where free land would be given to them, the Nor'Westers to take them down free of charge.

Macdonell was next attacked. He was told to surrender himself to the Nor'Westers as their prisoner. When he refused to do so, everything possible was done to intimidate the colonists. The Nor'Westers formed a camp on Frog Plains below the settlement. Bands of half-breeds passed Ft. Douglas day and night singing Indian war songs. Shots were fired after dark at the settlers. Horses belonging to the settlers were shot with arrows and the deed attributed to a few harmless Crees. The rest of the horses were taken by the half-breeds. The settlers were disarmed. A house here and there was plundered. The settlers were terrified. They urged Miles Macdonell to surrender. He still hesitated, knowing that his surrender would possibly be the prelude to the utter destruction of the colony. When, however, another Nor'Wester arrived on June 16th

with more reinforcements, he gave himself up and was at once taken to Ft. William as a prisoner.

The colony was now without a leader and Macdonell's worst fears soon proved to be too true. The crops were trampled down. Ft. Douglas, the colony mill, the stables and the barns were burned to the ground. The settlers who had agreed to go to Upper Canada were embarked in the North West canoes. The rest of the settlers were told to get out of the settlement at once. Thirteen families made their way by Lake Winnipeg to Jack River. Four men, however, barricaded themselves in a log building that had formerly been used as a blacksmith shop, and defied the half-breeds. The half-breeds left soon after this for their hunting grounds in the Qu'Appelle district. The four men who had remained behind—John McLeod, Archibald Currie, Hugh McLean and James McIntosh—gathered in the wheat which had not been destroyed, rebuilt Ft. Douglas and made preparations for the return of the colonists.

The half-breeds who had taken a part in driving the colonists out were feasted, thanked in public and openly rewarded by the Nor'Westers.

7—On March 19th, 1816, Governor Semple seized some papers belonging to the Nor'Westers. He was convinced after he had read through the papers that the Nor'Westers were planning to attack the settlement. He, therefore, ordered the destruction of Ft. Gibraltar.

8—The attack on the settlement, which ended in the massacre of Seven Oaks, occurred about six o'clock on June 19th. Apparently it was originally intended that the Nor'Westers from Ft. William should co-operate with the half-breeds from the west under Cuthbert Grant. The Nor'Westers, however, did not arrive at the Forks until three days after the battle had taken place.

9—Lord Selkirk was at the Sault Ste. Marie when the news of the Seven Oaks massacre was brought to him. He decided to sail straight for Ft. William at once and to arrest the Nor'-West leaders who would be there for the summer conference. He tried to induce Askin and Ermatinger, who were Justices

of the Peace for Upper Canada, to make the arrests, but they refused. There seemed to be no one else to do it; time was short, so Selkirk decided to arrest the leaders himself.

On August 12th he put ashore near Ft. William and pitched his tents about a mile above the North West forts. On the morning of August 13th he arrested William McGillivray. John McLaughlin and Kenneth McKenzie offered to go bail for him but Selkirk refused to accept it. As the third warrant was read the Nor'Westers prepared to resist. They demanded the liberation of McGillivray and attempted to close the gates. Selkirk's soldiers quickly put an end to their resistance. There were a number of Indians and about two hundred Nor'Westers within the fort. They looked on in amazement while McGillivray himself was held as prisoner and Selkirk's men came and went on official duty within the walls of the fort.

10—It was agreed between Selkirk and the Nor'Westers that all the papers within the fort should be sealed jointly by Selkirk and the Nor'Westers for future examination. Many of these sealed bundles were afterwards broken open and the contents burned in the kitchen fire.

11—Immediately after the arrest of McGillivray the Nor'Westers despatched a messenger in an express canoe to get a warrant for the arrest of Selkirk. There was some difficulty in getting a Justice of the Peace to issue a warrant. Finally, however, one was secured from Dr. Mitchell of Drummond's Island. Early in November it was served upon Selkirk. He refused to obey it, undoubtedly believing it to be illegal. Word was at once sent to the Colonial Office that Selkirk had resisted arrest and the whole weight of the influence of the Colonial Office was brought to bear against him.

12—In 1802 when Alexander Mackenzie was in England in connection with the publication of his book, he urged upon the Colonial Secretary the desirability of bringing about a union of all the great commercial organizations operating under the British flag, including the North West Fur Company, the X Y Company, the Hudson's Bay Company, the East India Company and the South Sea Company. Again in 1811, Alexander Mac-

kenzie urged upon the North West Fur Company the advisability of purchasing a controlling interest in the Hudson's Bay Company, but his advice was not taken. After 1816, however, the Nor'Westers openly advocated the union of the two companies. Selkirk stubbornly refused to consider the idea. The coalition did not take place until 1821, a little more than a year after Selkirk's death.

13—The first treaty made between the Indians and the white men west of the Great Lakes.

14—On February 11th, 1817, the Colonial Secretary, Bathurst, sent a despatch to Sherbrooke, Governor of Canada, that had a tremendous effect upon the colonial courts, lawyers, commissioners and all minor officials. The despatch reads in part as follows:

"By resisting the execution of the warrant issued against him Lord Selkirk has rendered himself doubly amenable to the laws. . . . You will therefore without delay on the receipt of this instruction take care that an indictment be preferred against his Lordship for the rescue of himself detailed in the affidavit of Robert MacRobb and upon a true Bill being found against him you will take the necessary and usual measures in such cases for arresting his Lordship and bringing him before the court from which the process issued. Surrounded as Lord Selkirk appears to be with a military force which has once already been employed to defeat the execution of legal process it is almost impossible to hope that he will quietly submit to the execution of any warrant against himself so long as an opening is left for effectual resistance. It is therefore necessary that the officer to whom its execution is entrusted should be accompanied by such a civil—or if the necessities of the case should require it, by such a military—force as may prevent the possibility of resistance. . . ."

The information which led Bathurst to despatch this letter came undoubtedly from one of the Nor'Westers. Selkirk was thus practically condemned without having had an opportunity to say a word in his own defence. It was not until more than a year later that Selkirk learned of this letter and even then

quite by accident. The Attorney-General of Lower Canada submitted a number of papers to Lord Selkirk and this letter happened to be amongst them. As soon as the mistake was discovered, personal representation was made to Selkirk not to use the information which he had thus secured. Naturally he refused to accede to this request.





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